

WESTERN HILLS VIADUCT REPLACEMENT PROJECT

Highlights from Dec. 3, 2020 Joint Public Meeting

CINCINNATI – The City of Cincinnati and Hamilton County held a joint public meeting Thursday evening, Dec. 3, 2020, to share details about the Western Hills Viaduct Replacement Project.

The design of the new viaduct, which the city and county announced last month, will be a single-deck extradosed bridge built approximately 50 feet south of the existing viaduct. An extradosed bridge combines the major elements of cable-stayed and box girder bridges. The deck of an extradosed bridge provides the primary load-bearing support with cable stays attached to low towers for supplemental support.

The meeting, which was conducted virtually from 6:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. via Zoom and YouTube, included a formal presentation by project leaders and a question-and-answer session with the public and media. A total of 103 attended the meeting on Zoom and by telephone. Another 40 watched via YouTube.

Highlights from the presentation follow below.

HIGHLIGHTS

Bill Shefcik, Western Hills Viaduct project manager for the City of Cincinnati's Department of Transportation & Engineering (DOTE), discussed the condition of the existing viaduct, the timeline for the replacement project, funding status and integration of the project with the Interstate 75 interchange.

"Determining the structure type is an important milestone in the life of our project," Shefcik told the audience, adding, "We are planning to put out a bid for a general contractor next year to begin initial site preparation."

Site preparation will include demolition of the former Q Laboratories building located at Harrison and State avenues in South Fairmount and construction of foundational supports for roadway ramps on the west end of the project corridor. In addition, over the next several years, the project team will continue to pursue additional funding, relocate utilities, including a Duke Energy substation, and finalize detailed design and engineering plans.

The existing viaduct will remain in place until the replacement project is completed in 2028, Shefcik said. The impact to traffic during construction will vary over the life of the replacement project but will be minimal during site preparation and the early phases of construction.

Based on a long-term agreement with Hamilton County, the City of Cincinnati will continue to perform regular maintenance on the existing viaduct.

Shefcik also gave a funding update, noting that the team has secured \$125 million, or more than a third, of the total \$335 million needed to build the replacement bridge, including \$66 million in matching funds shared equally by the county and city. The remaining funds are expected to come from a combination of federal and state grants and proceeds from the recently passed Hamilton County transit tax.

Hamilton County Engineer Eric Beck talked about the county's bridge-maintenance agreement and its joint sponsorship of the Western Hills Viaduct replacement project.

"The new Western Hills Viaduct is a top priority for both the city and county," Beck said. "Because of our great partnership, we have made significant strides identifying and securing the funds needed to build this critical infrastructure project and are confident we will secure the remaining funds."

Sajid Abbas, the Western Hills Viaduct project manager for San Francisco-based T. Y. Lin International, gave details about the design of the new viaduct, how the extradosed bridge type was chosen and how it will be built.

Key features of the new viaduct include:

- A single deck
- Eight travel lanes, four in each direction
- A 14-foot wide, protected multi-use path for pedestrians and bicyclists on the south side
- An 8-foot wide sidewalk on the north side
- Four sets of support piers in the railyard (reduced from 20 sets on the existing viaduct)
- Two sets of cable-stayed towers

"The twin cable-stayed systems serve important structural and aesthetic purposes," Abbas said. "They provide supplemental reinforcement for the 560-foot clear span and create an elegant architectural feature. This project will be an iconic landmark for Greater Cincinnati."

ABOUT THE PROJECT

The City of Cincinnati and Hamilton County are leading a joint effort to replace the Western Hills Viaduct. The team has secured \$125 million of the \$335 million needed to build a new "extradosed" bridge to replace the existing 88-year-old viaduct. Site preparation is expected to begin in the summer or fall of 2021. Updates will be shared as the project progresses. For more information, please visit www.cincinnati-oh.gov/WHV.

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Note: A media kit that includes background materials and artistic renderings is referenced in the email accompanying this summary.

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